CIA Burglarized Homes Of Americans Abroad

Associated Press

The Central Intelligence Agency gained information about certain Americans living abroad through burglaries at their homes or offices, CIA Director George Bush said in an affidavit made public yesterday.

It was not clear from the affidavit whether CIA agents themselves conducted the burglaries. A CIA spokesman declined comment, saying it would be inappropriate to elaborate on Bush's statement.

The sworn statement was filed in U.S. District Court in New York in connection with the Socialist Workers party's multimillion-dollar lawsuit against the government intelligence agencies. The party seeks damages for allegedly illegal harassment of political activities.

THE PARTY'S presidential candidate, Leter Camejo, criticized the intelligence-gathering tactics.

"American citizens don't forfeit their constitutional rights when they cross the borders of the United States," he said. "These actions by the CIA are absolutely illegal."

The Political Rights Defense Fund, which is financing the party's lawsuit, released the Bush affidavit and said it shows that CIA agents "burglarized the apartments of American citizens living abroad and may be continuing to do so."

In the affidavit July 1, Bush said CIA files show that information "was acquired as a result of several surreptitious entries that were made into premises abroad as to which certain (party members) had regular access or may have had a proprietary interest."

The CIA director also said agency files "do contain information indicating that conversations of certain (party members) were overheard by means of electronic surveillance conducted abroad."

Bush provided no other details about the number and date of the burglaries and wiretapping.

HE DID not specifically state whether CIA agents conducted the operations.

The defense fund said Bush's refusal to list the dates of the burglaries and wiretapping "raises the likelihood of very recent or continuing use of these tactics."

Party officials believe that "if these methods had been discontinued some time ago, this information probably would have been included in the affidavit," the defense fund statement said.

The CIA is fighting efforts by party attorneys to obtain details of the burglaries and wiretapping.

In the affidavit, Bush said he submitted a second statement, classified top secret, providing more information about the break-ins and electronic surveillance and arguing that the material includes state secrets which are exempt from disclosure.

Bush's second affidavit was submitted for the judge's private perusal.